somewhat apart from the world, a kind of school, and somewhat akin to Buddhist monasteries (although they were not made up of celibates), apparently were fairly numerous and the stimulus given by them may in part account for the intellectual activity of the time. The Neo-Confucianists could, if they chose, plead precedent in the example of their Confucian predecessors, for one of the most important of the immediate disciples of Confucius had declared that he daily examined his actions and his thoughts to see whether they were correct and upright, and Confucius and some of his successors were surrounded by admiring pupils in a more or less informal fellowship. The emphasis on these features by the Sung philosophers, however, seems to have been due chiefly to Buddhism. It may also have been stimulated by the forcible retirement of members of the school from public office at the intervals when Wang An-shih's adherents were in power.

Negatively, many of the Sung thinkers revealed their Ch'an background by reacting against it. The Ch'an Buddhist held knowledge to be intuitive—derived by purely subjective processes. He offered no way of verifying the information obtained in this fashion and could not tell whether it corresponded with outward reality. He tended to believe that the only reality is mind. Neo-Confucianists opposed to this a Taoist conception of a universal reason, of which both external nature and ourselves are a part. This would exalt reason, and although numbers of Sung Neo-Confucianists held to the sudden enlightenment of the Ch'an, many had a philosophy arrived at by rational rather than intuitive processes. They believed that by looking

within we understand the rest of the universe, and that we can correct the information so obtained by an investigation of the world outside ourselves. This investigation of the external world was justified in part by reference to a passage in the *Ta Hsiieh* ("Great—or Higher—Learning"), a small treatise of the Confucian school of the Chou dynasty which had been imbedded in the *LI Chi* and to which the Neo-Confucianists gave especial study and honor. This passage declared that the ancients had discovered that all ordered government, proper social organization, and ideal human conduct depend ultimately on the extension of knowledge, and that this, in turn, is to be achieved by the "investigation of things." Chu Hsi especially made much of the "investigation of things,"